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SUBJECT: GUIDANCE FOR SEPTEMBER 20 UNSC OPEN DEBATE ON THE  
MIDDLE EAST

¶1. (SBU) USUN is instructed to draw from the following points in its statement at the September 20 UNSC open debate on the Middle East.

-- Mr. President, a two state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict remains a key priority of President Bush. The ongoing bilateral dialogue between Prime Minister Olmert and President Abbas is key to achieving meaningful progress on a successful path to Palestinian statehood. We were pleased to see as a product of this dialogue the recent decision by the two sides to create negotiating teams that will memorialize their understandings so that the creation of a Palestinian state can move forward.

-- To demonstrate U.S. commitment to this process, and to build on progress being made through these bilateral talks, Secretary Rice is visiting Jerusalem and Ramallah September 19-20 for meetings with Israeli and Palestinian leaders.

-- The United States will continue to work with the parties and the international community with the goal of realizing President Bush's vision of two states, Israel and Palestine, living side by side in peace and security.

-- We look forward to the Quartet meeting, planned for September 23 here in New York, as well as the subsequent dinner the Quartet will have with members of the Arab League, following up on a previous meeting in Sharm al-Sheikh earlier this year.

-- We also look forward to the international meeting planned for later this year, announced by President Bush on July 16. The purpose of these events is to lend international and regional diplomatic support to the parties' own efforts to resolve their differences.

-- At the same time, there is an urgent need for financial support for the Palestinians. We look forward to a constructive and productive Ad Hoc Liaison Committee meeting on September 24, and urge all countries to provide the maximum contribution they can to support the Palestinians.

-- We welcome initial steps by the parties to meet previous commitments and to effect changes on the ground, and encourage continued steps to build confidence and create a positive atmosphere, including by responsible regional states.

-- As Secretary Rice has said, "we will not abandon the

1.5 million Palestinians in Gaza and indeed will make every effort to deal with their humanitarian needs." We remain troubled by the violent takeover in Gaza by Hamas, a terrorist organization, which has stifled freedom of speech and the press since taking control of Gaza. We continue to call for an end to rocket fire against Israel. Secretary Rice has also said, we "view Gaza and the West Bank as constituent entities of a future Palestinian state. The legitimate government of Gaza is ultimately that of the Palestinian Authority."

-- We call on Hamas to curb illegal smuggling of weapons into Gaza, to curtail the activities of terrorist groups within Gaza such as Palestinian Islamic Jihad, and to end its own terrorist activities.

#### LEBANON/SYRIA

-- The U.S. condemns in the strongest possible terms yesterday's assassination of yet another Lebanese Parliamentarian, Antoine Ghanem. We call for an immediate end to the use of intimidation tactics and violence as tools to subvert the democratic process in Lebanon.

-- As Secretary Rice said yesterday, the "attack is yet another incident in an ongoing campaign of targeted assassinations of Lebanese leaders who have worked to promote a sovereign and democratic Lebanon free from Syrian influence."

-- Lebanese elections, which are scheduled to begin within days, must be allowed to occur without threats and foreign interference, and must be free, fair, and held on-time and according to the Lebanese Constitution.

-- We urge Lebanese parliamentarians to fulfill their constitutional duty to vote for a new president. This is what the Lebanese people deserve.

-- The Lebanese Armed Forces demonstrated courage and resolve in their fight against Fatah al-Islam fighters.

-- We urge all member states to continue generous assistance to Lebanon as it secures its territory against terrorist groups like this one and addresses the needs of those affected by the fighting.

-- The U.S. expedited over 40 plane loads of military assistance to Lebanon during the operation and will continue to provide significant military support. On September 10, we pledged an additional \$10 million to UNWRA to assist displaced Palestinian refugees from Nahr Al-Bared and host families, both Lebanese and Palestinian. In addition, to assist the Lebanese communities surrounding Nahr Al-Bared, we will immediately provide \$100,000 for urgent needs and will review ongoing assistance in northern Lebanon to provide additional long-term resources. This is in addition to our pledge of \$3.5 million made to UNRWA's Flash Appeal immediately following the start of the operation.

-- We remain deeply concerned by on-going illegal weapons shipments across the Lebanon/Syria border and urge all parties to assist the Lebanese government to secure its borders.

-- We continue to call on Syria and Iran to cease their destabilizing tactics in Lebanon. The Lebanese must select their next president without foreign interference and Iran and Syria must stop their ongoing weapons shipments to terrorists and armed groups within Lebanon.

RICE